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WASHINGTON, JULY 9, 1849.

For the National Era.

SKETCHES OF MODERN REFORMS AND REFORMERS, IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

NEW SERIES.

Defects of the Reform Bill—Origin of Chartism—The "People's Charter" Promulgated in 1838—The Riots of 1839 and 1842—The Vengeances of the Government—Messrs. O'Connor, Lovett, Collis, Vincent, J. B. O'Brien, and Cooper, among the Victims—The Nonconformist Newspaper Established by Mr. M'Intosh—Mr. Surge—Organization of the Complete Suffrage Union—State of the Suffrage Reform—Character of the Chartists.

The old-fashioned Tories declare that the Reform Bill is "abominable" on the British Constitution. Though it ushered in a better era, an experience of seventeen years has proved that power has not yet departed from the privileged few. So soon as the intoxicating enthusiasm with which the reformers hailed this measure had given place to sober examination, its defects became apparent. It acknowledged the principle of representation. It did homage to the immunities of prescription. It abolished rotten boroughs, but gave a preponderating share of representatives to small constituencies. It enlarged the suffrage instead of the right of voting upon property instead of mind.

A few examples of its inequalities are given. For instance, Glasgow, with a population of 270,000, Manchester of 200,000, Birmingham of 160,000, Leeds of 160,000, were allowed two members of Parliament each; while Cricklade, with a population of 1,500, Retford of 2,400, Wemlock of 4,000, were allowed two members each. Pimlico, Lambeth, Marylebone, and Tower Hamlets, with an aggregate population of 1,100,000, had two members each, whose eight votes were balanced by the members of West Huntingdon, Marlborough, Dorchester, and Truro, with an aggregate population of 12,500. The entire metropolis, with more than 2,000,000 of inhabitants, received sixteen members, whose power in the House was multiplied by the sixteen members of eight boroughs, with a total population of less than 34,000. Fifteen of the principal cities and towns in the Kingdom, containing 3,500,000 people and 160,000 electors, were allowed thirty-two representatives, while the same number was assigned to twenty-seven boroughs, containing 170,000 inhabitants and 6,900 electors.

The inequalities in the distribution of the suffrage are not striking. The number of males in the United Kingdom, of the age of twenty-one years and upwards, is about 7,000,000. The number of registered electors is a little over 1,000,000. Thus, but about one-seventh of the adult males is entitled to vote. The suffrage is most unequally distributed amongst one thousand. The House of Commons consists of 655 members, which gives an average of 11,500 electors to each member. But, 15 members are returned by less than 200 electors each—50 by less than 300 each—100 by less than 500 each—and so on, till careful calculation make it apparent that a clear majority of the House is returned by 290,000 electors, or a little more than one quarter of the entire body, which body consists of only one-seventh of the adult male population.

In the distribution of members, reference was had to the supremacy of the landlord interest. Thus, South Lancashire, which swarms with a manufacturing population of more than 1,000,000, and has 25,000 electors, was balanced by aristocratic Lymington, with 3,300 inhabitants, and 150 electors whom any lord can buy. West Yorkshire, the seat of the wool's interest, with 1,200,000 people and 40,000 electors, was given the same weight in the House as any two of numerous boroughs, with a joint population of 6,000, whose 400 or 500 electors were the cowering vassals of some great landed proprietor. In Lancashire and Yorkshire, whose skies are blackened with the smoke of their manufactures, there is one member for every 55,000 inhabitants, while rural Rutland has one for every 9,000, and corn-growing Dorset for every 13,000. Manchester and Salford, the centre of the cotton interest, with 300,000 people, send three members, and agricultural Buckinghamshire, with less than half that amount of population, sends eleven.

The usual complexion of the House is alike caused by and aggravates the evils that spring from unequal representation and partially distributed suffrage. In the House previous to the present, there were 265 members related to the Peers of the Realm; 153 officers of the army and navy; 63 clergymen; and 247 patrons of church livings. Of the 655 members, there were only about 200 who had not either, office, place, pension, or patronage.

These tedious details, which might be multiplied indefinitely, will enable any very ordinary arithmetician to answer the question, which the Chartists have rung in the public ear of England: "Does the Reformed House of Commons represent the People of Great Britain and Ireland?"

The meager fruits brought forth by the Parliament elected under the Reform Bill, combining with the distress that pervaded the country in 1837, convinced a large mass of the enlightened working men, that Labor must look for relief to a radical change in the Constitution of the popular branch of the Legislature. After a year's discussion, they agreed upon a fundamental law for Parliamentary Reform, to be the representative of the common people of the Realm.

It would be doing an injustice to some of the working men in England to suppose that they for one moment intended that the radical form in Parliament as the final remedy for the enormous evils that make one-eighth of the people of the entire population paupers in all but name. To the working men, the Chartists were a reform, only so far as it concerned the depressed classes, a social remedy for the perceptions they have, or of sympathy for the perceptions they have. The leading souls in the Chartists, however, had their eyes on the whole Governmental structure. They felt it not, as an instrument to attain their ends, but as an instrument to attain the ends of the working men, and the radical form in Parliament as the final remedy for the enormous evils that make one-eighth of the people of the entire population paupers in all but name. To the working men, the Chartists were a reform, only so far as it concerned the depressed classes, a social remedy for the perceptions they have, or of sympathy for the perceptions they have. The leading souls in the Chartists, however, had their eyes on the whole Governmental structure. They

and this is the essence of Chartism. Its principles, which fall like household words on the American ear, filled the heart of British aristocracy with dismay and wrath. Nor were the terror and indignation abated when their promulgation was followed by laying the "Great Petition" in favor of the People's Charter, bearing one million two hundred thousand names, on the table of the House of Commons.

The Chartists were chiefly laboring men, dwelling in cities and towns. They justly expected clemency and aid from liberal Whigs who had protested against the aristocratic features of the Reform Bill. They received neither.

The cause of national representation was regarded as only the poor man's question, and as such it was left exclusively to the poor. The poor, thus abandoned to fight the battle single-handed and alone, overthrew a fatal resistance against all above them. For-sighted and pure-minded men among them urged the superiority of intellectual and moral means over the brute force of the sword. "Charism" was an emblem of the principles of the Reformation. Philosophical Reform, and Civil Emancipation, were the mottoes of these Chartists. These three specific aspirations are, still, a great source of strength to the working classes.

Chartism is a living, breathing, force, which

is means in the statement of ends, the importance of education, of industry and economy, of self-reliance without arrogance, and of an independent and manly bearing in their intercourse with the world. Bad men are among them, who have often imposed their ignorance or folly upon them. But, the Chartists, as a class, removed from the state of barbarism and brutality, which their traditors have assigned to them, as they are from the utterance of truth or the practice of charity.

It stirs the blood not a little to see such men as Lovett, and Bright, and Cooper, and Cooper, suffer through long years, in dark and filthy cells, for teaching the people to be "discontented" with a Government that first denies them any voice in its administration, and then taxes them down to the state of pauperism. It is a great pity that the poor man's question, as it was left exclusively to the poor, thus abandoned to fight the battle single-handed and alone, overthrew a fatal resistance against all above them. For-sighted and pure-minded men among them urged the superiority of intellectual and moral means over the brute force of the sword. "Charism" was an emblem of the principles of the Reformation. Philosophical Reform, and Civil Emancipation, were the mottoes of these Chartists. These three specific aspirations are, still, a great source of strength to the working classes.

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